

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR INCLUSION

Policy Mapping Grid: Estonia



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Further information about the Teacher Professional Learning for Inclusion (TPL4I) activities is available on the [TPL4I web area](#).

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SECTION 1: WIDER POLICY CONTEXT

Wider policy context

The Estonian [Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020](#) guides the most important developments in the area of education. It is the basis on which the government will make its decisions for educational funding for 2014–2020 and for the development of programmes that support the achievement of necessary changes.

The general goal of drafting the Lifelong Learning Strategy is to provide all people in Estonia with learning opportunities that are tailored to their needs and capabilities throughout their whole lifespan, in order for them to maximize opportunities for dignified self-actualization within society, in their work as well as in their family life.

To pursue the general goal, five strategic goals have been established:

- 1. Change in the approach to learning. Implementation of an approach to learning that supports each learner's individual and social development, the acquisition of learning skills, creativity and entrepreneurship at all levels and in all types of education.*
- 2. Competent and motivated teachers and school leadership. The assessments of teachers and head [teachers] including their salaries are consistent with the qualification requirements for the job and the work-related performance.*
- 3. Concordance of lifelong learning opportunities with the needs of labour market. Lifelong learning opportunities and career services that are diverse, flexible and of good quality, resulting in an increase in the number of people with professional or vocational qualifications in different age groups, and an increase in overall participation in lifelong learning across Estonia.*
- 4. A digital focus in lifelong learning. Modern digital technology is used for learning and teaching effectively and efficiently. An improvement in the digital skills of the total population has been achieved and access to the new generation of digital infrastructure is ensured.*
- 5. Equal opportunities and increased participation in lifelong learning. Equal opportunities for lifelong learning have been created for every individual.*

[\(Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020, pp. 3–5\)](#)

In 2018, changes in the educational arrangements for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) were made in the [Basic and Upper-Secondary School Act](#). This created greater opportunities for schools to organise pupils' individual needs and to implement support systems. Main amendments included an increase in the state budget to raise teachers' wages and to increase the operating expenditure support for the implementation of enhanced or special support for learners, and the labour costs of support specialists.



Wider policy context

The Ministry of Education and Research (MER) is currently preparing strategies for 2035. [The joint vision for 2035](#) for the MER's four areas of responsibility looks beyond education and research. The goal is an inclusive society of welfare and shared values, a competitive and sustainably growing economy, and a viable and growing Estonian culture and language.

The vision document formulates five main goals for 2035:

- a 'seamless' educational system that supports individual choices, i.e. smooth transitions;
- valuing the Estonian culture and language and a cohesive society;
- new skills and better use of existing skills;
- learning as collaboration, and the teacher as a guide;
- research-based mindsets and top-level universities.



SECTION 2: VISION AND MAIN PRINCIPLES OF TPL4I POLICY

2.1 Policy vision

Policy priorities	Findings
<p>2.1.1 Policy is guided by a vision that all teachers (i.e. student teachers, beginning teachers, experienced teachers, teacher educators) can access career-long professional learning opportunities regarding the principles of inclusive education</p>	<p>2.1.1.1 ‘The guidelines on the Lifelong Learning Strategy for 2014–2020 encourage consideration of the individual needs of learners with SEN and implementing principles of inclusive education’ (European Agency, Country information for Estonia, Systems of support and specialist provision).</p> <p>2.1.1.2 One of the strategic measures of the Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020 is: <i>Developing an in-service education system for the teachers and the Heads of basic schools, kindergartens and vocational schools. The main focus here would be rethinking the role of the Head of a school as well as that of the teachers, so that they would be able to create an atmosphere in which attention would be paid to the development of each learner, to the development of their potential, and to valuing individual differences</i> (section 1.3, p. 9)</p>
<p>2.1.2 Policy is guided by a vision that all teachers receive education regarding their role and collaboration in and contribution to inclusive education</p>	<p>2.1.2.1 The Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020 states: <i>Cooperation in all its diverse forms is the key to success in the education system: it is very important to have cooperation with teachers and educational institutions, the school and parents, but also between the school and the local government and the local private sector</i> (section 1.4, p. 9).</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
	<p>2.1.2.2</p> <p>This co-operation contributes to teacher professional learning for inclusion. In-service training of staff in educational institutions is guided by the priorities agreed with the stakeholders. Inclusive education has been a priority in every year of the strategy.</p>
<p>2.1.3 Policy is guided by a vision that all teachers receive education regarding their pedagogical responsibility to promote the interaction, learning, participation and collaboration of all learners</p>	<p>2.1.3.1</p> <p>The Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020 introduced the term 'approach to learning', and changing this approach is one of the strategy's goals. Approach to learning includes an understanding of the nature of learning, its goals, methods and the role of all the different parties in the learning process. The Approach to Learning and How it is Changing background document suggests a framework of reasons and objectives for changing the approach to learning based on the Estonian context and the broader school culture in which the change will take place. The objective of the framework is to provide a background and support to practitioners, in particular educational institutions and their partners, to help them understand the broader picture in which their activities will be placed.</p>

Evaluative comments for 'Policy vision'

To make better use of Estonia's high-quality education and research and development systems for the benefit of people, society and economy of the country, the Ministry of Education and Research is preparing strategies for the next period (2021–2035) in the fields of education, research, youth, and language policy. In spring 2018, the ministry formed expert groups that, by March 2019, drew up the vision documents for 2021–2035. The vision documents will serve as an input for the strategy working groups that started work in spring 2019.



The summary of the vision documents of three expert groups – [Smart and Active Estonia 2035](#) – considers learning as collaboration, and the teacher as a guide.

Learning is learner-centred and collaborative, focused on empowering and supporting each learner, self-realisation and coping in different roles. Significant keywords include the meaningfulness of learning, learner and teacher autonomy, close cooperation, and conscious and systematic feedback between all participants in the learning process. [...] The ability of the teacher to be a tutor, to mentor pupils, to contribute to forming the learning path and support its successful navigation, is important (p. 15).

2.2 Main principles

Policy priorities	Findings
2.2.1 Teachers' professional learning is defined in policy as a prerequisite for inclusive education	<p>2.2.1.1 Teacher training curricula in higher education institutions are based on the Universities Act and two regulations of the Government of the Republic: The Standard of Higher Education and The Framework Requirements for Teacher Training.</p> <p>2.2.1.2 <i>According to the higher education standard, the objectives and learning outcomes of higher education curricula must correspond to the requirements and tendencies of international legislation governing the respective profession and if a professional standard exists, take account of the acquisition and implementation of the knowledge and skills described in it.</i></p> <p><i>Competencies described in the occupational standards for teachers, special education teachers and vocational teachers are taken as starting points in the development of teacher training curricula. (Eurydice, National Education Systems, Estonia, Initial Education for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education)</i></p>



Policy priorities	Findings
	<p data-bbox="763 308 860 336">2.2.1.3</p> <p data-bbox="860 360 1957 472"><i>Occupational standard is a document that describes a job and provides a list of skills, knowledge and attitudes, i.e. competence requirements, necessary for successful performance of work.</i></p> <p data-bbox="860 496 1868 528"><i>The occupational standards for teachers specify six compulsory competencies:</i></p> <ol data-bbox="909 552 1487 858" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="909 552 1218 584">1. <i>supporting learners;</i><li data-bbox="909 603 1406 635">2. <i>planning of learning and teaching;</i><li data-bbox="909 659 1084 691">3. <i>teaching;</i><li data-bbox="909 715 1487 746">4. <i>reflection and professional development;</i><li data-bbox="909 770 1330 802">5. <i>cooperation and supervision;</i><li data-bbox="909 826 1429 858">6. <i>development, creation and research.</i> <p data-bbox="860 882 1957 954"><i>Level 6 and 7 of the occupational standard for teachers specify the following optional competencies:</i></p> <ol data-bbox="909 978 1621 1066" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="909 978 1621 1010">1. <i>supporting learners with special educational needs;</i><li data-bbox="909 1034 1429 1066">2. <i>implementation of digital education.</i> <p data-bbox="860 1090 1688 1121"><i>Each competency has been described through activity indicators.</i></p> <p data-bbox="763 1145 1989 1217">(Eurydice, National Education Systems, Estonia, Initial Education for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education)</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
	<p>2.2.1.4</p> <p>Occupational standards are updated every five years. In line with general educational policy trends, the necessary teacher competences are also updated. The last update is valid from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020. The occupational standard was updated with the expiration date. The principles of inclusive education have been consistently followed, digital competence has been integrated into mandatory competences through occupational standards, and greater emphasis has been placed on supporting learners, including those with special educational needs.</p>
<p>2.2.2 Policy states that the principles and practice of inclusive education should be part of initial teacher education</p>	<p>2.2.2.1</p> <p>‘In the course of initial teacher training, all teachers receive training modules to prepare them for working with pupils with special educational needs (SEN)’ (European Agency, Country Policy Review and Analysis – Estonia, p. 42).</p> <p>2.2.2.2</p> <p>‘During initial teacher education, all students undertake training modules to prepare them to work with pupils with special educational needs’ (European Agency, Country information for Estonia, Teacher education for inclusive education).</p> <p>2.2.2.3</p> <p><i>Teacher training includes three components:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>General education studies</i> • <i>Study related to specific subject(s)</i> • <i>Professional study (educational science, psychology, didactics and practical training).</i> <p>(European Agency, Country information for Estonia, Teacher education for inclusive education)</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
<p>2.2.3 Policy states that beginning teachers should receive appropriate education and support to enable them to acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills for inclusive education</p>	<p>2.2.3.1 'National in-service training programmes organise courses for teachers on how to deal with learners with SEN in the inclusive classroom' (European Agency, Country Policy Review and Analysis – Estonia, p. 42).</p> <p>2.2.3.2 <i>One of the main priority topics of in-service training for teachers, school leaders and school members is inclusive education. ('Competent and motivated teachers and school leaders 2016–2019' programme, in Estonian).</i> (European Agency, Country Policy Review and Analysis – Estonia, p. 43)</p> <p>In Estonia, a professional year programme is implemented to support a beginning teacher. During the professional year, in-service training and initial education, the competences described in the occupational standard for teaching are acquired, renewed and upgraded.</p>
<p>2.2.4 Policy ensures that experienced teachers receive appropriate education and support to enable them to acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills for inclusive education</p>	<p>2.2.4.1 In-service training is generally free for Estonian teachers. As many teachers in the labour market did not receive initial training on the principles of inclusive education, 25% of centrally commissioned in-service training focuses on inclusive education.</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
<p>2.2.5 Policy states that specialist teachers and other professionals (e.g. speech and language therapists, multilingual education teachers and other professionals who work in schools) receive appropriate education and support to enable them to acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills for inclusive education</p>	<p>2.2.5.1</p> <p><i>The main activity of a special education teacher is supporting and directing students with special educational needs in cooperation with other specialists. The standard at the seventh professional level that forms the basis for the special education curriculum was finished in 2013 and it includes seven compulsory competencies. The compulsory competencies include:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><i>1. noticing, investigating and evaluating the special educational needs of a learner;</i><i>2. planning teaching activities;</i><i>3. developing learning environment;</i><i>4. teaching;</i><i>5. reflection and professional development;</i><i>6. special education counselling and mentorship;</i><i>7. participation in development, creation and research.</i> <p><i>Optional competencies include:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><i>1. staff management;</i><i>2. special education training and supervising.</i> <p><i>There are 10 competencies included in the profession of a special education teacher and these have been worded in a way similar to those included in the profession of a teacher.</i></p> <p>(Eurydice, National Education Systems, Estonia, Initial Education for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education)</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
	<p>2.2.5.2</p> <p>The standard at the seventh professional level that forms the basis for the special education curriculum was updated in April 2018. The compulsory competencies remained the same, but changes to the Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act (in 2018) were considered.</p> <p>2.2.5.3</p> <p>The state ensures the availability of special teachers, speech therapists and psychological and social pedagogical counselling services free of charge for all schools. Local government ensures the availability of support specialists at the school level. The state allocates financial subsidies for recruiting support specialists.</p> <p>(European Agency, Country information for Estonia, Financing of inclusive education systems)</p> <p>2.2.5.4</p> <p>According to the Higher Education Act the ‘requirements applicable to studies at the level of higher education’ are determined by the Higher Education Standard. According to the Higher Education Standard, the goals and learning outcomes of the curriculum must take into account the occupational/professional standard. Professional standards are updated every five years. The professional standard for a school psychologist is currently being updated. The professional standard for speech therapists was updated in May 2019. The professional standard for social pedagogues was updated in April 2018. The standard that forms the basis for the special education curriculum was also updated in April 2018. The compulsory competencies remained the same, but changes to the Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act (in 2018) were considered.</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
2.2.6 Policy states that teacher educators working in university education departments or pedagogical institutes should be trained and committed to the inclusive education agenda in their courses, as understood in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the European Disability Strategy	–

Evaluative comments for ‘Main principles’

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SECTION 3: GOALS AND CONTINUUM OF SUPPORT FOR TPL4I POLICY

3.1 Goals

Policy priorities	Findings
3.1.1 Policy states that all teachers should have qualifications that reflect an inclusive education agenda	3.1.1.1 The new professional standards for teachers provide a more detailed description of the teacher competencies needed to implement inclusive education.
3.1.2 Policy states competence areas for inclusive education for all teachers working at different levels of education (e.g. professional development of all teachers to facilitate their involvement in co-teaching, planning together, developing differentiated materials collaboratively, etc.)	3.1.2.1 <i>For implementing the Lifelong Learning Strategy, the Ministry of Education and Research has compiled a programme 'Competent and motivated teachers and school leaders 2016–2019'.</i> <i>Within the framework of the programme's measures and activities, models of co-operation and learning together are implemented. The aim is to support teachers and other school staff members. In educational discussions, schools also include members of the local community. To support teachers in problem-solving and to improve their prevention work, support specialists are included in team training. Extra attention is paid to different kinds of network development.</i> (European Agency, Country Policy Review and Analysis – Estonia , p. 42).



Policy priorities	Findings
	<p>The necessary activities to develop in-service education system for the teachers and the heads of basic schools, kindergartens and vocational schools are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Teacher education institutions will develop initial and in-service education curricula that support the objectives of the strategy and that are closely integrated with practical work. These institutions will use efficient teaching methods and flexible learning to motivate teachers to apply their acquired knowledge and skills in their work</i>• <i>In-service courses will be offered to vocational school teachers at the State level, in order to better integrate general and vocational courses, emphasizing the importance of acquiring key competences. Opportunities to update their skills and knowledge base will be set up for vocational teachers in workplaces</i>• <i>Those offering in-service courses for school leadership will focus on the management of learning and developmental processes, as well as on the implementation of the new approach to learning</i>• <i>In order to guarantee the quality of in-service education and retraining, quality standards for training will be developed for the providers and State funds will be used only for those training courses that are in compliance with the quality requirements</i>• <i>Educational institutions will create more flexible opportunities for retraining teachers (new subjects, additional educational technologist competences, special education competence, etc.)</i>• <i>Opportunities will be created for alternate educational and work experience related routes to the teaching profession.</i> <p>(Lifelong Learning Strategy for 2014–2020, section 1.3, p. 9)</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
3.1.3 Policy states that all teachers' professional learning opportunities consider teacher competences for inclusive education	–
3.1.4 There is a formal strategy for promoting dialogue between ministries, regional/local authorities/municipalities and teacher educators to agree on the requirements of teachers' professional development opportunities for inclusion	<p>3.1.4.1</p> <p>The Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020 states:</p> <p><i>Introducing the new approach to learning and discussing implementation options in local contexts, including all the important stakeholders (the learner, teacher, school leader, parent, school owner, local cultural institutions, the private sector) (section 1.4, p. 9).</i></p> <p>3.1.4.2</p> <p>The Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020 also outlines a number of activities to develop co-operation (section 1.4, p. 9).</p> <p>3.1.4.3</p> <p><i>The concept of continuing education for teachers and heads of educational institutions, which was prepared in 2014, specifies duties and responsibilities of various teacher education partners: the teacher, the educational institution, the owner of the school, the Ministry of Education and Research, the institutions providing continuing education and the university competence centres. Specific duties and responsibilities related to determining training needs, planning continuing education, allocating resources,</i></p>



Policy priorities	Findings
	<p><i>organising trainings, assessing effect and maintaining records have been determined at every level.</i></p> <p>(Eurydice, National Education Systems, Estonia, Continuing Professional Development for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education)</p> <p>3.1.4.4</p> <p><i>General schools, in co-operation with universities, conduct projects to create equal opportunities in education, thereby launching and implementing common development and research projects. Centralised in-service training is co-ordinated in teachers' and school leaders' training centres. All topics of in-service training proceed in order of priority, which is pre-arranged among partners. These topics then are given to the universities as the basis for creating their new in-service training curricula.</i></p> <p>(European Agency, Country Policy Review and Analysis – Estonia, p. 43)</p>
<p>3.1.5 There is a mechanism to ensure that all professional learning opportunities available to teachers are aligned with national- and local-level policy goals for an understanding of inclusive education</p>	<p>3.1.5.1</p> <p>According to the Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act it is the teacher's professional duty to 'develop their professional skills and be familiar with education innovations' (§ 75 (2)). A broad range of inclusive education training is provided in a centrally co-ordinated manner. Educational institutions can also apply for project grants to organisation team training on inclusive education.</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
3.1.6 There are strategies to ensure that local-level professional opportunities for teachers are flexible/adaptable to local school contexts and school development plans for inclusive education	3.1.6.1 <i>Professional standards for teachers have been developed for several professional levels, describing the opportunities for individual development of teachers. Development of an electronic self-assessment instrument, which supports a teacher in determining his or her own training needs, have been developed and under implementation by the schools.</i> <i>The benefit of continuing education will be assessed yearly during performance appraisal interviews with the head of the school.</i> (Eurydice, National Education Systems, Estonia, Continuing Professional Development for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education)
3.1.7 There is a medium- and long-term review strategy for teachers' professional learning opportunities to ensure they meet system requirements for an inclusive education system	3.1.7.1 The planning, budgeting, implementation and reporting of the actions and activities necessary for the implementation of the Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020 are carried out through programmes. Programmes are reviewed at the end of each year and amended in accordance with the State Budget Act of the following year. One programme is 'Competent and motivated teachers and school leaders 2019–2020'.

Evaluative comments for 'Goals'

In order to implement the Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy, the Ministry of Education and Research has drafted an implementation plan and programmes, including 'Competent and motivated teachers and school leaders 2019–2020'. Programmes are updated every year.



3.2 Continuum of support

Policy priorities	Findings
<p>3.2.1 There is a strategy to ensure a continuum of diverse professional learning opportunities for inclusive education – for pre-service, beginning and experienced teachers, as well as teacher educators and support teachers – across all levels where teachers work</p>	<p>3.2.1.1</p> <p><i>The Ministry of Education launched continuing training programmes for teachers and school heads with implementation of inclusive education as the cross-cutting priority. Inclusive education is one of the main priorities of the in-service training courses.</i></p> <p>(European Agency, Country information for Estonia, Teacher education for inclusive education)</p> <p>3.2.1.2</p> <p><i>The programme aims to improve the competency of teachers, academic staff and heads of educational institutions and, in turn, the learning outcomes of learners. The learning methods employed support:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>the individual development, creativity and enterprising and innovative spirit of learners;</i>• <i>the implementation of principles of inclusive education;</i>• <i>improved coping of learners with special educational needs across all levels and types of education.</i> <p>(European Agency, Country information for Estonia, Teacher education for inclusive education)</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
<p>3.2.2 There are strategies for developing leadership competences (e.g. school leadership or learning support leadership roles) for inclusive education in all relevant professional learning opportunities</p>	<p>3.2.2.1</p> <p><i>The role of a school leader in creating a school’s culture is of crucial significance, because the learning environment depends first and foremost on the headmaster – whether they value, motivate and support a learner and their developmental potential, whether they support the development of teachers and other school staff members, and whether the school works well with the community and families. In order for Estonian schools to be led by competent and motivated school leaders, who have the determination and ability to carry out the objectives set out in the strategy, the following steps need to be taken</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>• Associations of the Heads of preschool institutions, general education schools, vocational schools and institutions of professional higher education, and school owners will develop and the Ministry of Education and Research will implement competence requirements for headmasters. This will be the basis for recruiting headmasters, providing feedback on their performance, as well as offering additional training, which among other things also emphasises the objective of implementing the new approach to learning;</i><i>• The Ministry of Education and Research, in cooperation with school owners, will develop an external assessment system for school leaders, through which they will get regular professional feedback about their work and how it relates to the school’s results, as well as suggestions for additional training. The quality indicators of the institution will be used as the basis in assessing the results of the work of the Heads of educational institutions.</i> <p>(Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020, section 2.3, pp. 11–12)</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
3.2.3 There are mechanisms to support schools/higher education institutions to develop strategic plans for teachers' professional learning in inclusive education	<p data-bbox="763 323 860 352">3.2.3.1</p> <p data-bbox="860 376 2018 485"><i>Professional standards form a conceptual basis for the initial and continuing education of teachers; continuing education of heads and teaching staff is based on competence models.</i></p> <p data-bbox="860 509 2002 735"><i>[Estonian Lifelong Learning] Strategy 2020 provides for the development of competence centres at Tallinn University and the University of Tartu that are responsible for the development of teacher training and educational sciences. The competence centres are targeted at collecting and developing knowledge about learning and teaching, and passing on such knowledge to other educational institutions, incl. institutions of higher education.</i></p> <p data-bbox="763 759 1771 794">(Eurydice, National Education Systems, Estonia, Teachers and Education Staff)</p> <p data-bbox="763 818 860 847">3.2.3.2</p> <p data-bbox="860 871 2029 1177"><i>Higher education institutions work together to develop the principles for assessing the results of their teaching staff. In assessing the work of the teaching staff in universities (including during the recruitment process), the quality of teaching work is taken into account, including the international aspect. This includes having work and teaching experience in foreign universities, participation in international development programmes, development of curricula, teacher effectiveness and learners' feedback, the teacher's self-development, etc. This also includes the results of academic research carried out by the staff.</i></p> <p data-bbox="763 1201 1688 1236">(European Agency, Country Policy Review and Analysis – Estonia, p. 42)</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
3.2.4 There are strategies to support effective collaboration and joint work between schools and higher education institutions/universities	3.2.4.1 <i>The Ministry of Education and Research will launch a programme to support cooperation between teachers and educational institutions, learning from each other, as well as carrying out joint projects with cultural institutions and businesses on all levels of education; also, cooperation between teachers (including university) in integrating learning outcomes and key competences, cooperation between teachers and support staff in solving students' behavioural problems and analysing learning difficulties, developing new methods for cooperation between teachers in upper-secondary schools and universities, carrying out studies on activities, joint projects between university teaching staff and researchers, participation in international cooperation projects and comparative studies, etc.</i> (Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020, section 1.4, pp. 9–10)

Evaluative comments for 'Continuum of support'

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SECTION 4: CAPACITY BUILDING, FUNDING AND MONITORING OF TPL4I POLICY

4.1 Capacity building

Policy priorities	Findings
<p>4.1.1 There are strategies to increase the capacity of all schools/higher education institutions to support all teachers to engage in professional learning activities on inclusive education</p>	<p>4.1.1.1</p> <p><i>Tallinn University and the University of Tartu are responsible for the areas of teacher education and educational research, and for launching an educational research programme. The choice of topics will be based on the national education strategy priorities and directed towards developmental needs at all levels of education. Both universities will set teacher education and educational sciences as their priority fields and will accept responsibility for developing the area of education and for implementing the new approach to learning in the cooperation between educational institutions and employers.</i></p> <p>(Lifelong Learning Strategy, section 1.5, p. 10)</p>
<p>4.1.2 There is a mechanism to facilitate dialogue between all teachers/leaders/other stakeholders to develop a shared understanding of inclusive education as an approach that ensures high-quality learning opportunities for all</p>	<p>4.1.2.1</p> <p>Initiative 'Huvitav Kool' (interesting school) by the Ministry of Education and Research aims at reflecting society's expectations of school and education in order to make the learning experience interesting to students, teachers, parents as well as educational benefactors and friends of education.</p> <p>The initiative covers four important, expansive and inextricably connected fields in general education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • community involvement; • professional teachers;



Policy priorities	Findings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• optimal curricula;• supportive external evaluation processes.
4.1.3 There is guidance on how teachers working in mainstream school settings/higher education institutions can understand and enact inclusive education	4.1.3.1 Guidance about addressing the special educational needs of students in organising teaching and providing support services is available on the Ministry's website (in Estonian).
4.1.4 There are guidelines that support all teachers to collaborate to support all learners	4.1.4.1 Foundation Innove , an education competence centre, was created in 2003 by the Ministry of Education and Research. Innove compiles and develops national curricula, creates different teaching materials and promotes successful teaching methods . Among other things, Innove offers counselling and methodological support for families, teachers and schools to help them support learners with SEN. Innove's Educational Counselling Agency also produces guidance materials (in Estonian): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A systematic approach in schools to support school workers, children and parents (<i>Koolitöötajaid, lapsed ja lapsevanemaid toetav süsteemne lähenemine haridusasutuses</i>)• Considering learner individuality in ensuring affordable learning (<i>Õpilase individuaalsuse arvestamine jõukohase õppimise tagamisel</i>)• When reading is difficult for your child (<i>Kui lugemine on lapsele raske</i>)• Children's speech development, age 4–5 (<i>Lapse kõne areng. 4-5aastane laps</i>)• Children's speech development, age 6–7 (<i>Lapse kõne areng. 6-7aastane laps</i>).



Policy priorities	Findings
<p>4.1.5 There are guidelines on how methods of quality assessment, school evaluation, inspections and other accountability measures contribute to planning/identifying priority areas of professional learning activities for inclusive education</p>	<p>4.1.5.1 Guidelines are available from the Ministry's website (in Estonian) (juhendmaterjalid ja uuringud). The priority of external evaluation is supporting learner development.</p>
<p>4.1.6 There are strategies to support schools/higher education institutions to build strong leadership teams that are aware of the inclusive education agenda</p>	<p>4.1.6.1 <i>All schools must describe their SEN policy and the organisation of instruction for pupils with SEN in their own school curriculum. This document should describe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>common values and principles;</i> • <i>the co-ordination system and responsibilities of teachers, school leaders, other staff, etc.;</i> • <i>the system of identifying SEN, support measures, data collection and evaluation;</i> • <i>co-operation and participation (parents, all learners at school, all teachers, other schools, community, external institutions, etc.).</i> <p>(European Agency, Country information for Estonia, Systems of support and specialist provision)</p>
<p>4.1.7 There are incentives stated in policy for all teachers to engage in professional learning activities for inclusive education</p>	<p>4.1.7.1 Teachers have the main role in implementing a change in the approach to learning (Lifelong Learning Strategy, section 1, p. 7).</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
4.1.8 There are strategies stated in policy to develop the role of specialist teachers as a resource for mainstream schools	4.1.8.1 According to the Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act the services of at least a special education teacher, a speech therapist, a psychologist and a social educator must be ensured for learners, where necessary (§ 37, lg 2). This applies to all schools.
4.1.9 There are strategies to promote professional learning for inclusion in teachers' common competence areas (e.g. experienced teachers and specialist teachers are expected to engage in professional learning activities that promote inclusive education pedagogies, such as co-teaching)	4.1.9.1 <i>The school head appoints a person to organise co-operation between support specialists and teachers to support the schooling and development of learners with SEN.</i> <i>The person responsible for co-ordinating the schooling of a learner with SEN supports and instructs the teacher in identifying SEN. They make suggestions to the teacher, parents and school head regarding further educational work, the application of measures to support the learner's development or conducting further investigations. As such, they co-operate with teachers and support specialists.</i> (European Agency, Country information for Estonia, Assessment within inclusive education systems)
4.1.10 There are competences for professional learning in inclusive education for all teachers	4.1.10.1 The new professional standards for teachers contain the relevant competencies: Teacher, level 7 .

Evaluative comments for 'Capacity building'

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4.2 Funding

Policy priorities	Findings
<p>4.2.1 There are financial incentives to encourage all schools/higher education institutions to develop policy and action plans for teachers' professional learning for inclusion</p>	<p>4.2.1.1</p> <p><i>Up to 2013, continuing education for teachers was based on free market, all training funds were directed straight to schools, which decided on the use of the funds. Since 2013, a number of the continuing education courses have been ordered centrally, especially from universities and training providers offering teacher training, and proceeding from national education priorities. Continuing education funds are also used for supporting teachers' networks, incl. learning from each other. State foundations organise carrying out or ordering of continuing education. Centrally organised trainings are free of charge for teachers.</i></p> <p><i>A part of the training funds is still channelled to schools through local authorities along with the state education fund. Local municipalities may allocate additional resources for teachers' continuing education and determine the fields where they may be used. Schools make continuing education decisions on the basis of their needs and development plans. Management of training is the task of the school manager.</i></p> <p>(Eurydice, National Education Systems, Estonia, Continuing Professional Development for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education)</p>
<p>4.2.2 There are mechanisms for systematic data collection on expenditure on teachers' professional learning that informs cost-effectiveness issues</p>	<p>4.2.2.1</p> <p>Centrally commissioned teacher in-service training is funded through contracts that agree on training course topics, learning outcomes, volume and number of trainees. The training is recorded in a continuing education environment, Juhan, which provides a complete overview (in Estonian).</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
4.2.3 There are flexible resourcing mechanisms that foster teachers' professional learning at school level	4.2.3.1 Educational institutions can apply for project support to train the entire team.

Evaluative comments for 'Funding'

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4.3 Monitoring

Policy priorities	Findings
4.3.1 There is a comprehensive accountability framework for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of teachers' professional learning for inclusion activities	4.3.1.1 <i>In assessing a teacher's work, school leaders play a key role. Their role is to discuss and apply the rules governing the period of work time and compensation with the staff; to give teachers regular feedback on their contribution and competence; and support the teachers' professional and individual development.</i> (Lifelong Learning Strategy, section 2.2, p. 11) 4.3.1.2 <i>Higher education institutions will work together to develop the principles for assessing the results of their teaching staff. In assessing the work of the teaching staff in universities (including during the process of recruitment), the quality of teaching work will be taken into account, including its international aspect. This includes having work and teaching</i>



Policy priorities	Findings
	<p><i>experience in foreign universities, participation in international development programmes, development of curricula in a foreign language, teacher effectiveness and students' feedback, the teacher's self-development, etc. This also includes the results of academic research carried out by the staff.</i></p> <p>(Lifelong Learning Strategy, section 2.2, p. 11)</p> <p>The effectiveness of teacher in-service training is assessed based on data collected in the Juhan information system: content, volume, number of participants and feedback from participants. Teacher training is also registered in the Estonian Education Information System, where the head of the school can get a separate and school-based overview of each teacher.</p>
<p>4.3.2 Monitoring mechanisms ensure that inequalities in access to professional learning opportunities at regional or organisational levels are addressed</p>	<p>4.3.2.1</p> <p>Juhan, the in-service training information system, can monitor participation in training at regional and organisational levels.</p>
<p>4.3.3 There are mechanisms to support schools/teacher education departments/higher education institutions to have ownership of review and improvement processes in relation to teachers' professional learning</p>	<p>4.3.3.1</p> <p><i>There will be regular development discussions at educational institutions, which will be focused on the implementation of the new approach to learning. The Head of the school will motivate the teacher to approach each student individually, to participate in the development work of the school and in various forms of teacher training.</i></p> <p>(Lifelong Learning Strategy, section 2.2, p. 11)</p>



Policy priorities	Findings
4.3.4 There are mechanisms to share and analyse data to inform improvement processes in relation to teachers' professional learning at national and local level	4.3.4.1 <i>A user-friendly self-reflection platform will be created, in which a teacher will have the opportunity to test their skills; the self-analysis platform will be based on competences outlined in the professional standards for teachers.</i> (Lifelong Learning Strategy, section 2.2, p. 11) 4.3.4.2 The platform is already up and piloted. It is currently being adapted to meet the new professional standards for teachers.
4.3.5 There is data available on whether teachers are engaged in professional learning that is relevant to the level of education they teach	4.3.5.1 Participation in training is supervised by the head of the educational institution. For centrally commissioned training, the head gives consent to teacher participation through the portal.
4.3.6 There are mechanisms to ensure that teachers' professional learning contributes to improving inclusive education practice at school level/the level of a teacher education department or higher education institution	4.3.6.1 In Estonia, there are regular developmental conversations with staff in educational institutions, where professional development needs are usually identified. Much depends on the school team's awareness and prioritisation of inclusive education at organisational level. To enable this, appropriate training is provided to managers.



Evaluative comments for 'Monitoring'

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